THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. As per report received for Government of Orissa, almost the entire population of Saltwater crocodiles are confined to the creeks and river systems of the Bhitarkanika National Park which is free from any private rights to land, etc.

(b) No, Sir. The population of the Saltwater crocodiles as per census of 2005 is only 1,454 whereas the carrying capacity of Bhitarkanika National Park is estimated to be about 3,000.

(c) Does not arise.

Setting of Wildlife Crime Bureau

1320. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether poaching is one of the major reasons for wiping out tigers from tiger reserves, expecially at Sariska;

(b) if so, how Government plan to improve anti-poaching measures at the ground level;

(c) whether Government contemplate to set up Wildlife Crime Bureau to deal with wildlife criminals; and

(d) if so, by when and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of "Project Tiger" and "Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries", Central Assistance is provided to tiger reserves/National Parks/Sanctuaries in states for anti poaching operations. In tiger reserves, funding support is also provided for deploying armed strike squads, based on demand from States.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. Action has been taken for setting up a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.